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FRANKLIN FIELD

DISTRICT PROFILE AND PROPOSED 1979-1981
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

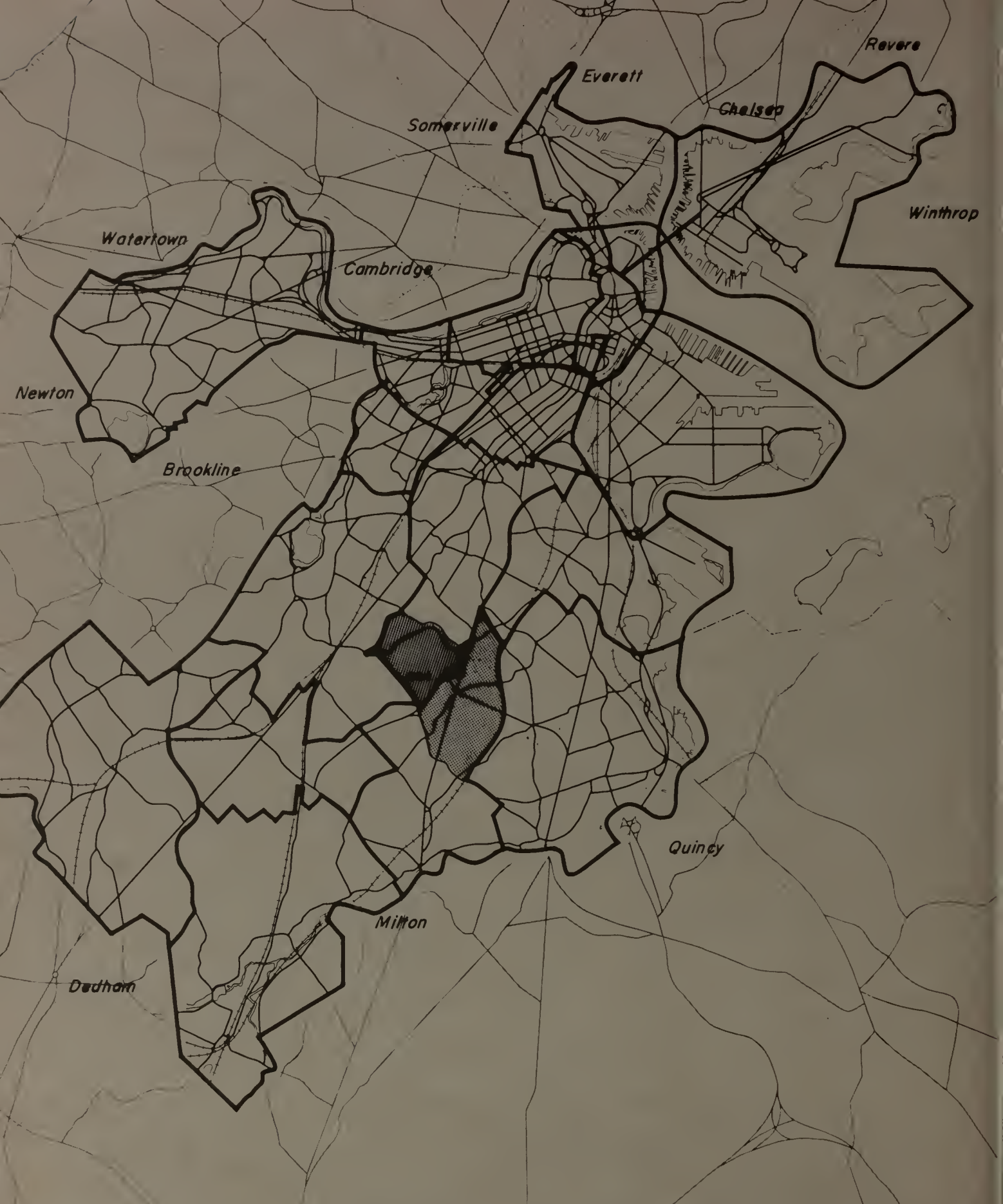
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City of Boston
Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Neighborhood Planning Program

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FRANKLIN FIELD

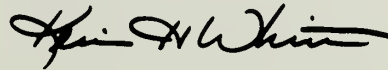


Franklin Field is an area where increased City action is vital. It is an area in transition. It has problems, but there are also many exciting opportunities for the future.

Since 1968, the City has invested a great deal of money and effort in Franklin Field with projects such as the Lee Community School, improvements to Franklin Park, and the Housing Improvement Program. The City is currently in the process of improving and repairing many streets in Franklin Field, planning for transit and commercial improvements on Blue Hill Avenue, and initiating housing programs to improve residential areas. Over the next three years, the City will continue its efforts to improve the quality of life in Franklin Field. Priorities for City funding and study will be housing, the revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue, and improvement of public facilities.

I hope this report will serve an important function; to encourage greater interest in the problems confronting Franklin Field and our City, and to help us develop solutions to these problems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin H. White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kevin H. White
Mayor

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I. Introduction/Summary

Franklin Field is a changing neighborhood. Over the past twenty years, Franklin Field's population has declined slightly, and has changed from a predominantly Jewish to a predominantly black neighborhood. Some of the housing has improved recently, other housing continues to decline. Blue Hill Avenue, once a bustling commercial strip, has many vacant storefronts now. These changes have had a severe impact on Franklin Field, leaving many problems which are as yet unresolved.

A 1977 City survey by Peter Hart studied the attitudes of people about their city and their neighborhood. This survey found that residents of Franklin Field emphasized four major issues: (1) the need for well-maintained housing, (2) better employment opportunities, (3) better city services, and (4) maintenance of parks and recreational facilities. Many of these issues are addressed in the City's 1978 Neighborhood Improvement Program, which responds primarily to the problems of deteriorating housing and neighborhood blight. In addition, Blue Hill Avenue is part of the Boston Plan and is a high priority for future Federal, State and City funding for revitalization.

This report proposes a Three-Year Comprehensive Development Strategy for Franklin Field, a coordinated effort to address the concerns of the community. As part of the effort to improve and maintain the quality of Franklin Field's residential neighborhoods, the City should:

- (1) Continue funding for a modified HIP.
- (2) Provide additional incentives for homeowners through the Pilot Interest Reduction Program.
- (3) Improve public housing with funds from Federal, State and local sources.
- (4) Improve neighborhood quality through the City's Open Space Management Program and capital improvements, especially in Concentrated Investment Areas.



- (5) Increase homeownership opportunities through new construction in selected areas and an expanded homesteading effort addressing City-owned tax foreclosed structures.

In addition, the City should increase its efforts to revitalize Blue Hill Avenue, to improve major public facilities, especially Franklin Park, and to provide improved human services, especially employment programs.



II. District Profile

A. EXISTING COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

1. Population and Income Characteristics

The population of Franklin Field has stabilized recently after decreasing over the past 30 years (see Table 1). However, Franklin Field lost a smaller percentage of its population than Boston as a whole.

TABLE 1:
Total Population 1950 - 1975

	Boston	Franklin Field	F. Fld. Pop. Loss
1950	801,444	28,384	—
1960	697,197	26,422	- 6.9%
1970	641,071	25,832	- 2.2%
1975 (est.)	637,986	25,675	- 0.6%
Total Loss	163,458	2,709	—

This stability disguises important racial and demographic changes over the past 10-15 years. As shown in Table 2, since 1960, Franklin Field has changed from an exclusively white neighborhood to one which is largely black.

TABLE 2:
Racial Composition 1960 - 1970

	Black Population	% of Total Population
1960	2,056	7.8%
1970	21,046	81.5%

Demographic changes have significantly affected Franklin Field. Racial transition was accelerated from 1968-1972 by the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group (BBURG) Program that expedited funding of FHA-insured mortgages in the area to minority families. As shown in Table 3, the number of children under 18 has increased substantially since 1960. A larger number of children places more wear and tear on the housing and also increases the need for schools and recreational facilities. The Hart Survey found that one of the primary concerns of residents of Franklin Field was the provision of recreational facilities. The elderly population in the area has decreased substantially since 1960.

TABLE 3:
Changes in Age Composition

	No. of Persons	% of 1970 Population	Change from 1960-1970
Total Pop.	25,832	100.0%	- 2.2%
Under 18	9,579	37.1%	+ 35%
Over 62	1,515	5.9%	- 50%

The 1970 median family income in Franklin Field, \$6,516, was two-thirds that of Boston as a whole, \$9,133. Some of this disparity is due to the presence of three large family public housing projects: Franklin Field Family and Elderly and Franklin Hill.

2. Economic Conditions and Unemployment

Franklin Field has one of the highest unemployment rates in the City

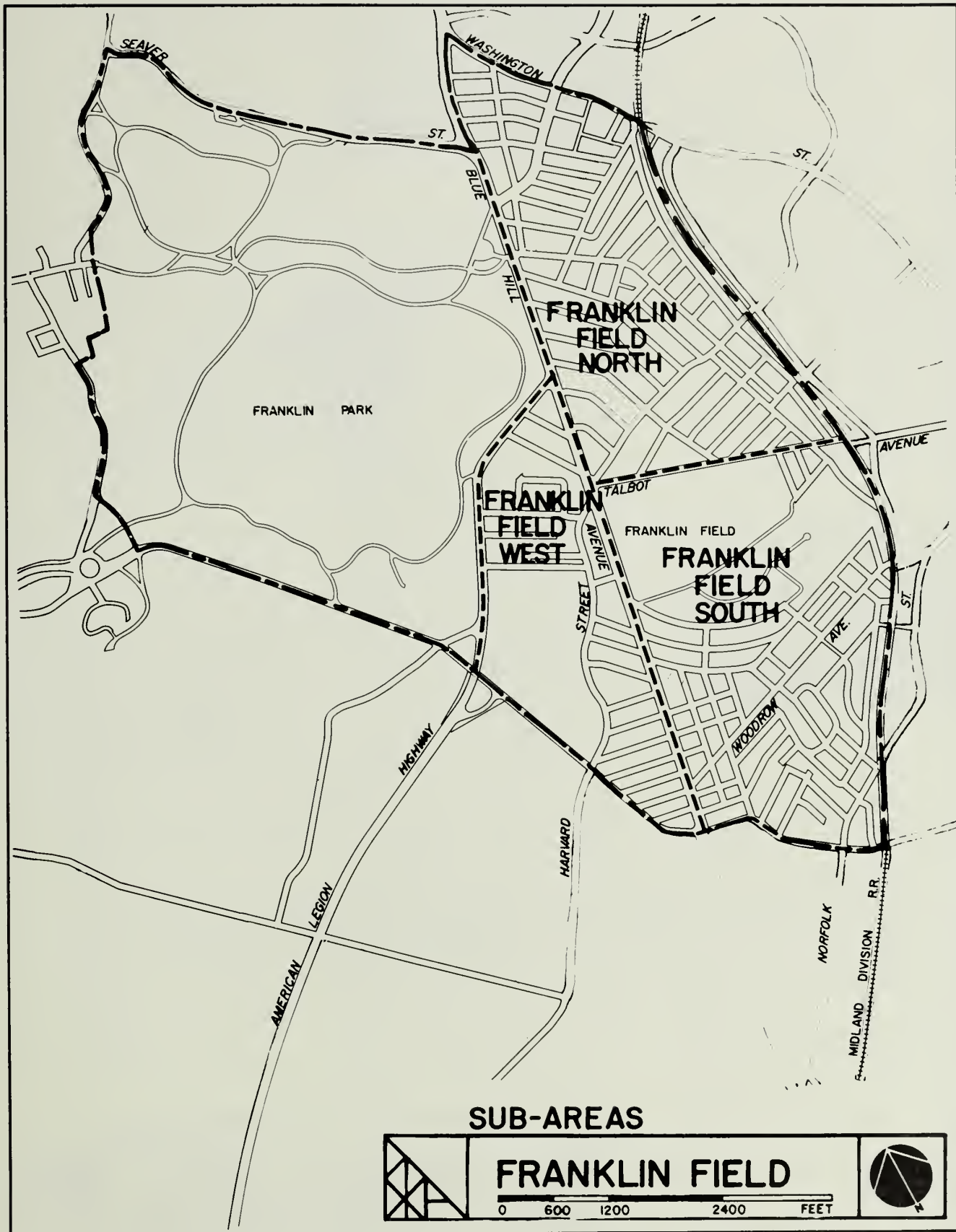
(22%), as compared to the City average of 12.8% and 8.6% for the Boston Metropolitan Area (SMSA). Very few jobs exist in Franklin Field and residents have expressed concern over the need for job training programs.

3. Housing Condition and Needs

The condition of housing in Franklin Field varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. Northern Franklin Field is characterized by 1, 2, and 3 family homes, with some larger structures on Blue Hill Avenue and Columbia Road. These homes are mostly owner-occupied and in good condition, although the level of owner occupancy and general maintenance declines as one moves south along Blue Hill Avenue. In the period from 1970-78, northern Franklin Field lost only 5.6% of its housing stock, compared to an 11% loss for the district. A problem area exists near Erie and Ellington Streets, with many vacant lots and abandoned buildings.

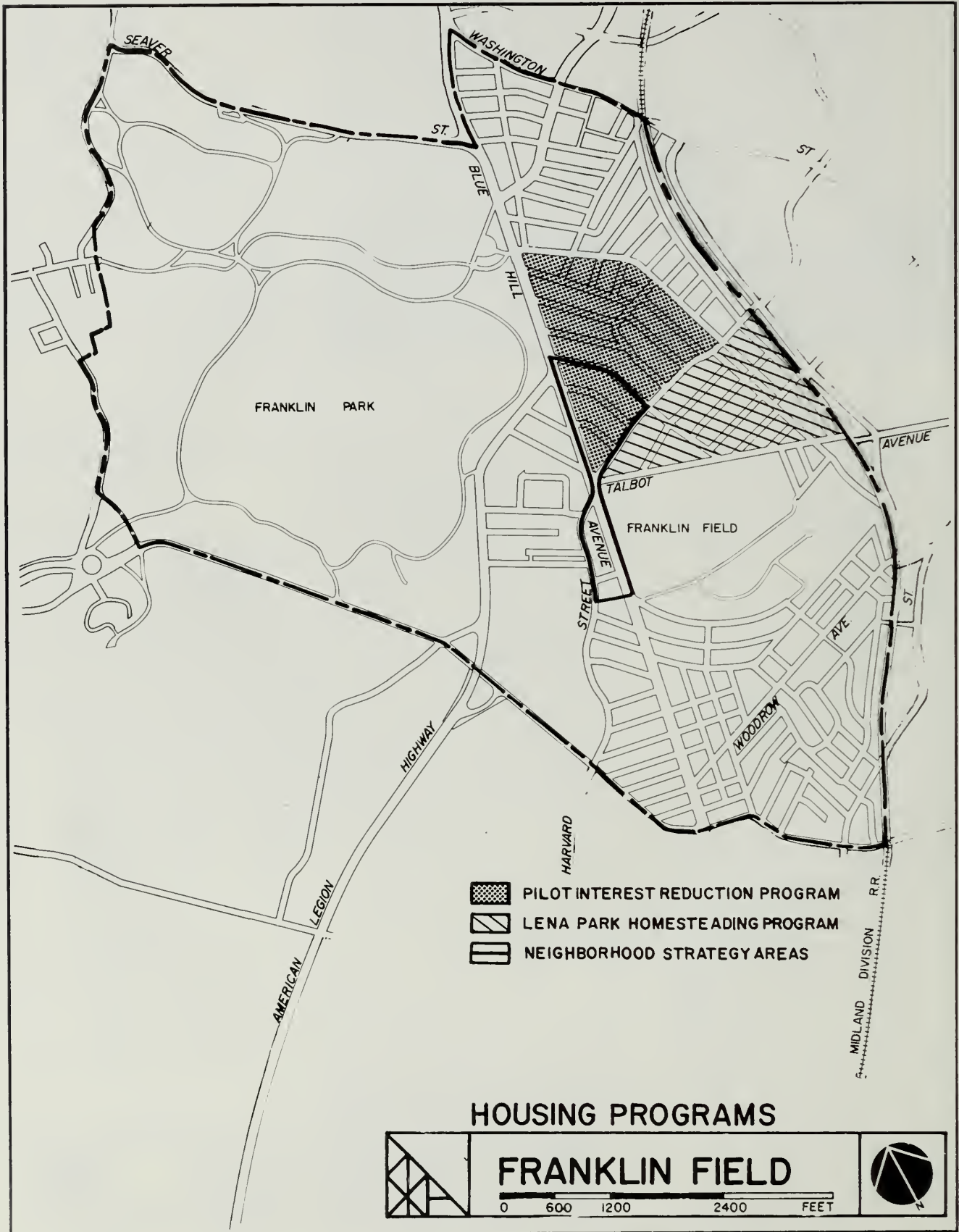
Most of the homes in western Franklin Field are 2 and 3 family buildings. These homes are generally sound, but have suffered recently due to deferred maintenance. There is more deterioration close to Blue Hill Avenue and the Franklin Hill public housing. Approximately 120 buildings are abandoned, several of which are incomplete HUD-owned Infill structures.

Housing in southern Franklin Field



SUB-AREAS





has deteriorated over the last 10 years, due to deferred maintenance and increased absentee ownership. Southern Franklin Field has lost 17.4% of its housing units, compared to 11% for the total district. An area of special concern is Arbutus and Lucerne Streets where vacant lots and abandoned buildings outnumber occupied structures.

Past public efforts in Franklin Field have emphasized the problems of residential housing deterioration, abandonment and subsequent demolition. The HIP program is designed to address the problem of housing deterioration, but has had limited success in Franklin Field. Franklin Field had an HIP budget of \$570,000 in 1975-77 and, of this, \$223,029 was actually returned to homeowners as 20%, 40% and 50% rebates.

TABLE 4:
HIP Participation 1975-1977

Total # of Eligible Structures	2,597
Total # of Rebates Approved	218
% of Total	8.4%
Total City Expenditure - 1977	\$ 223,029
Total Investment	\$1,087,583

HIP has been less successful in Franklin Field than in other parts of the City largely because residents of Franklin Field lack the money to do initial work and cannot obtain conventional loans.

Housing abandonment is a problem in several neighborhoods of Franklin Field. In August 1978, there were 120 abandoned houses. The City's demolition program has taken down many other buildings which were hazardous. Of the vacant buildings, 3% are HUD-owned and 2% are City-owned, while the remaining are privately owned. At present, in the absence of major programs for rehabilitation, most vacant buildings are demolished.

The demolition process removes one problem: unsafe buildings, and creates another: vacant lots. Many areas of Franklin Field, especially Arbutus-Lucerne and Erie-Ellington, are troubled by vacant lots which are dumped on by contractors. The BRA's Open Space Management Program is one facet in the effort to im-



prove the overall character of a neighborhood by improving these lots. Open Space Management crews worked extensively in Franklin Field, concentrating on many lots along Blue Hill Avenue (see Table 5).

TABLE 5:
Open Space Management, 1978

	#	Square Feet
Lots Cleaned	110	637,235
Lots Mulched	47	234,318
Lots Fenced	14	N.A.
Total Expenditure		\$116,972

The Lena Park CDC initiated a homesteading program in 1977, concentrating on the northern Franklin Field area. Lena Park received an allocation of \$100,000 to provide homeownership counseling to families in Franklin Field who are inexperienced in home finance, especially those that face potential mortgage default. In addition to counseling, Lena Park has obtained and begun to rehabilitate two homes.

Franklin Field contains three large public housing projects — Franklin Field, family and elderly; and Franklin Hill. Both have suffered over the past few years from major physical problems, such as inadequate electrical systems as well as a lack of general maintenance. The vacancy rate in the family projects is 20% and 40-50% in the elderly project. A team police program, which matches a police patrol with the housing project, has increased security for residents.

4. Commercial Revitalization Needs

Blue Hill Avenue is the major commercial strip for Franklin Field. Stores developed along the streetcar lines installed in the early 1900's, however, these shops declined rapidly after the trolley's removal in the 1950's. Today, most commercial ac-

tivity on Blue Hill Avenue is limited to a few stores concentrated at the major intersections such as Morton Street and Blue Hill Avenue. The remaining commercial space stands vacant and is a significant blighting influence on the entire area.

Three distinct needs exist for Franklin Field's commercial area. First, potentially viable business nodes still exist on Blue Hill Avenue around Floyd Street/Talbot Avenue and at Morton Street. These areas need to be improved. Second, convenience stores (small shops which serve immediate needs) are needed by residents all along the Avenue. Third, the existing abandoned commercial space should be either demolished or converted into a more appropriate use. Last winter, the Open Space crews boarded 13 commercial buildings on the Avenue to preserve them until these decisions are made.

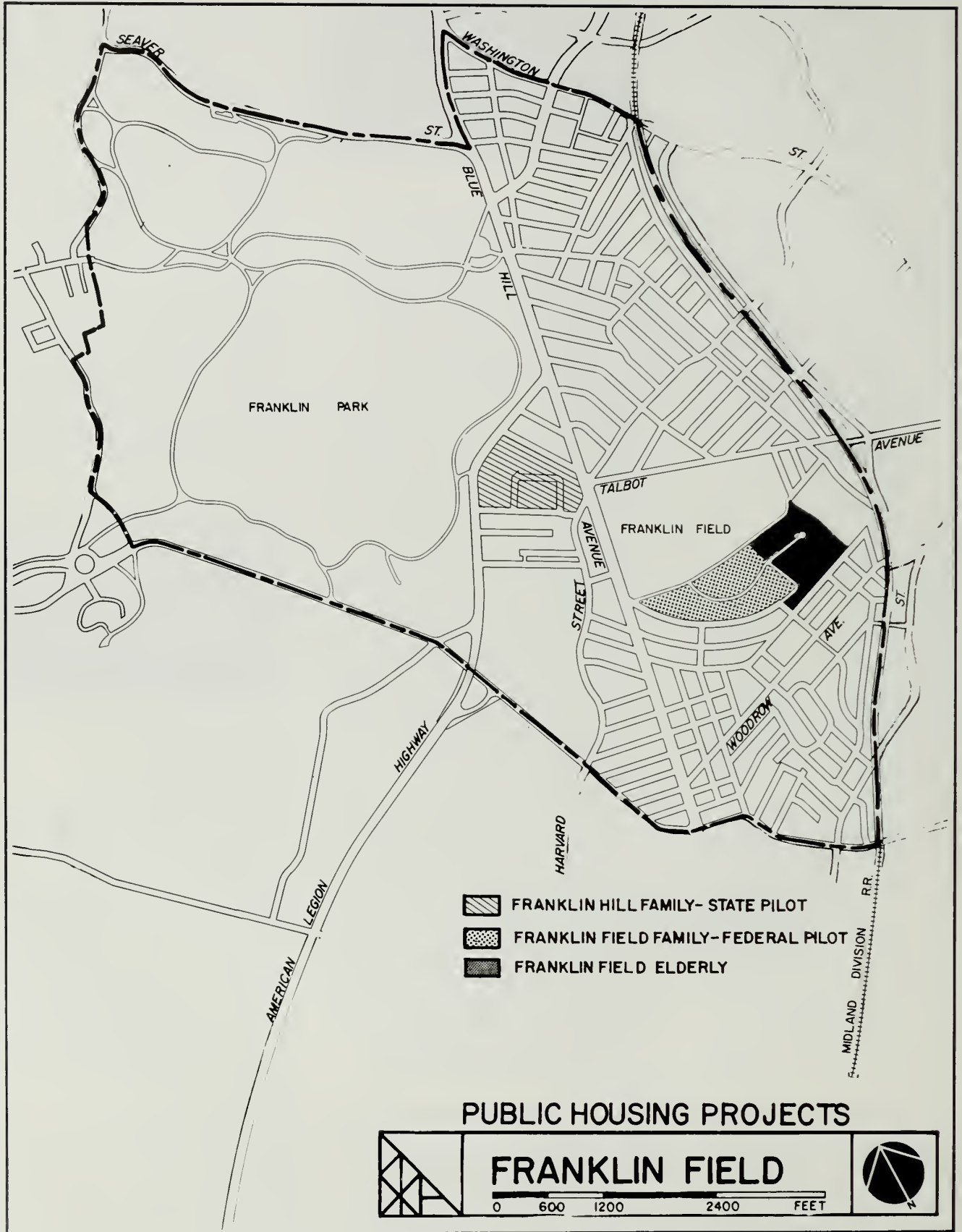


Blue Hill Avenue

5. Transportation

As part of the relocation of the Orange Line, the MBTA is currently studying the need for replacement transit service in the Roxbury/Franklin Field/Mattapan area. Replacement transit is vitally important to Franklin Field and could potentially serve as a catalyst for housing and/or commercial revitalization and increased employment opportunities. Blue Hill's commercial areas grew along the trolley lines and new transit through the area may spur a wave of redevelopment.

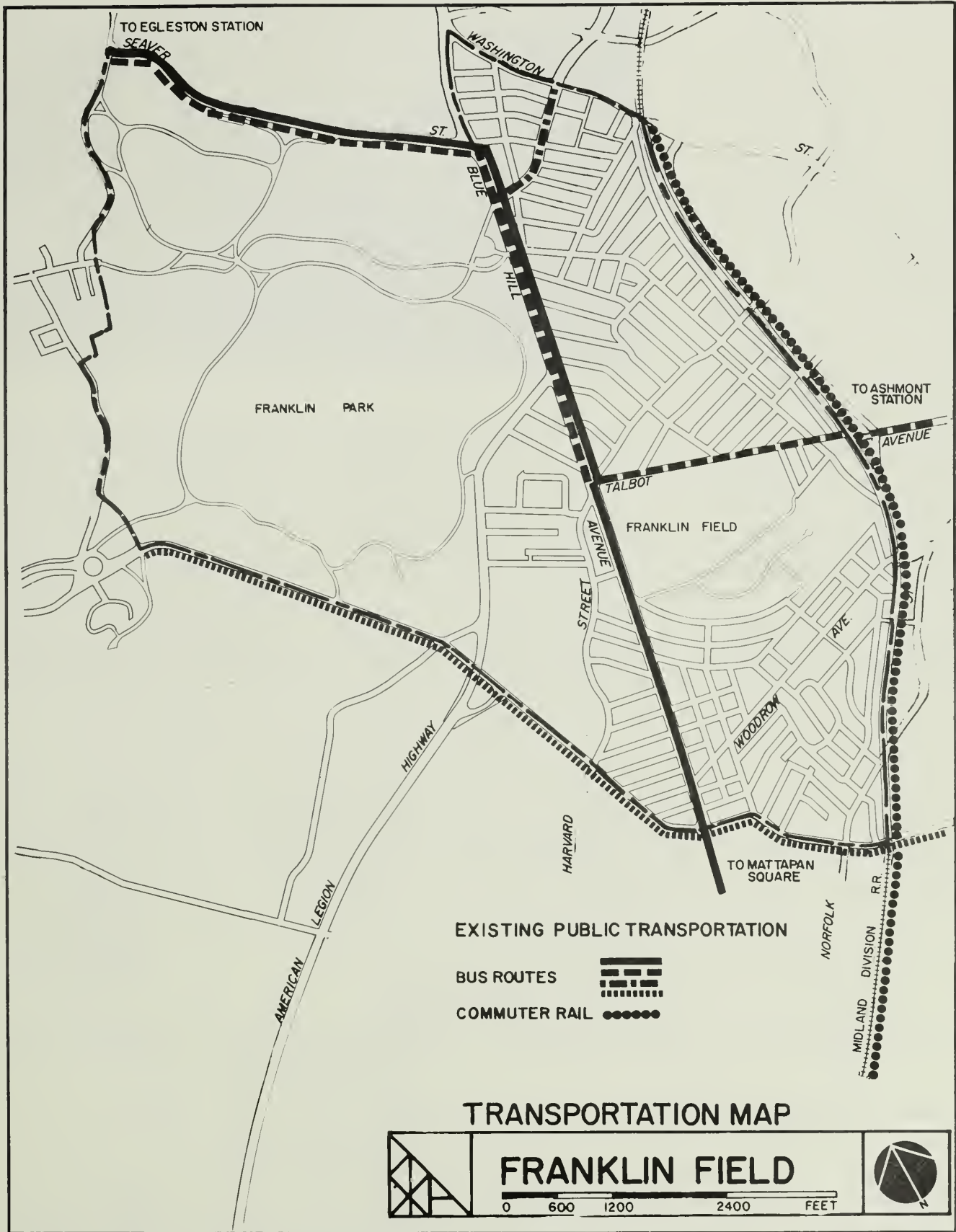
Currently, Franklin Field has local bus service which connects to Ashmont and the Red Line or Dudley and the Orange Line. As part of the Replacement/Transit Improvement Study, the MBTA found that several of the bus routes serving this area, especially those on Blue Hill Avenue between Mattapan Square and



PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS

FRANKLIN FIELD

0 600 1200 2400 FEET



Dudley, are frequently overcrowded and off-schedule. A need exists for increased and more regular service.

The City is applying for federal Urban Systems funding to reconstruct Blue Hill Avenue in order to improve both its safety and appearance. In addition to reconstruction, changes would include street trees, new traffic signals, better alignment of intersections and a new pedestrian signal at Harvard Street and Blue Hill Avenue. The improvements will extend from Grove Hall to Mattapan Square.

6. Community Facilities

Franklin Park is the largest open space in the City and is an important facility for the area. The City has recently made Franklin Park a priority for revitalization and usage has jumped in the past year. Other community facilities include Franklin Field, a 45 acre playing field which the City recently spent \$100,000 to reconstruct. Also in Franklin Field are the MDC pool and rink and Sportsman Tennis Club, which is privately owned, and has indoor and outdoor facilities.

The Lee Community School (to the east of the playing field) also provides recreational and educational programs.



The Hart Survey (1977) found that provision of additional recreational facilities and programs is high among the community's priorities, especially for small children and girls. All outdoor recreation facilities except the Erie-Ellington tot-lot are large area-wide facilities inaccessible to many of the area's youth.

7. Human Services

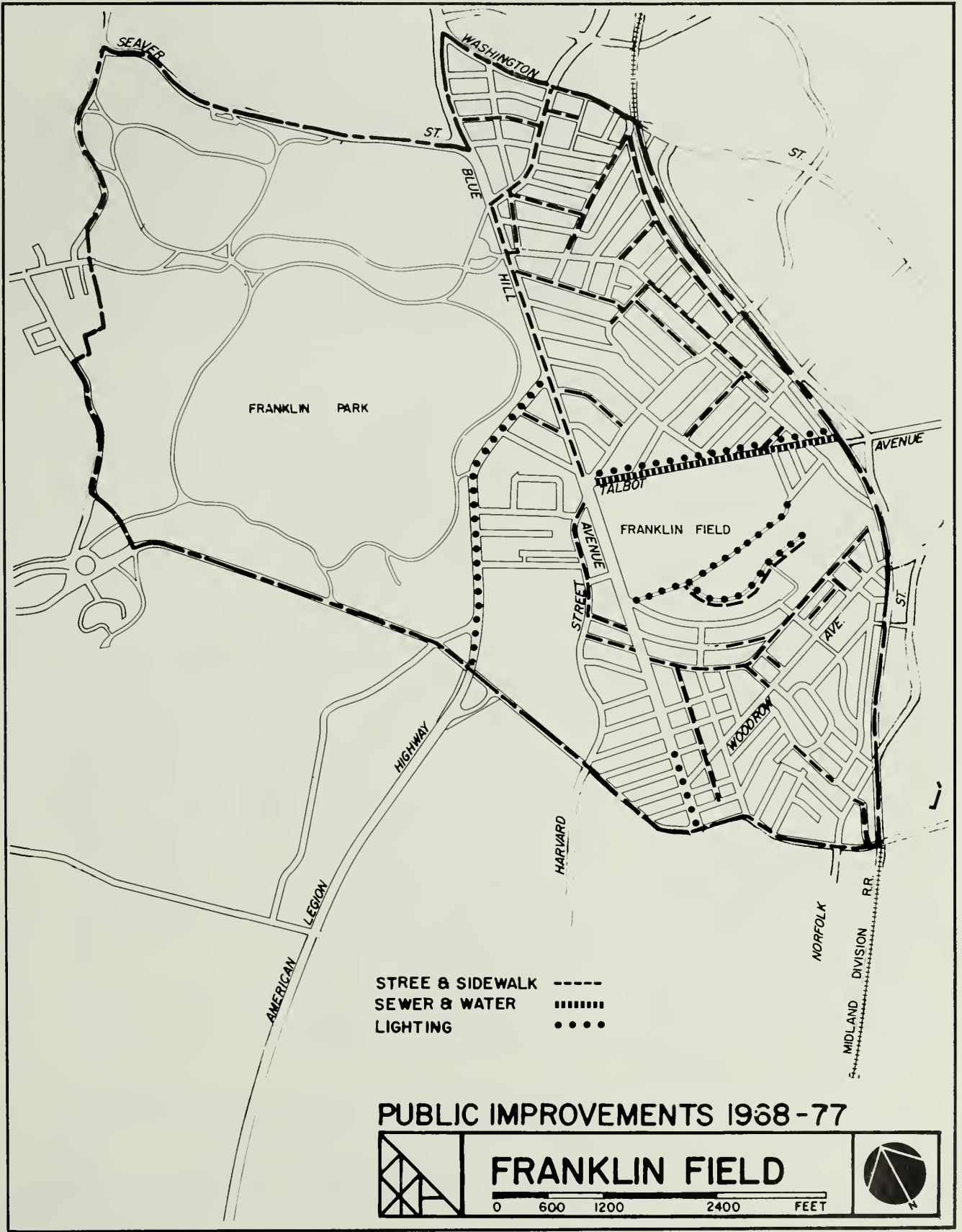
The major providers of human services to Franklin Field are the privately funded Lena Park CDC, the City's

Harvard Street Health Center and the City's Charles Drew Family Life Center (see Profile of Social Service Agencies below). These agencies provide important services, but not all are accessible to potential users and all, except the Lena Park Center, are overcrowded. The agencies are funded primarily through United Way, with additional help from the City and private foundations.

In addition, the City, through the Little City Hall, provides important

HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

Name of Organization	Lena Park Multi-Service Center	Harvard Community Health Center	Charles Drew Family Life Center
Address	150 American Legion Hgwy. Dorchester 02124	395 Blue Hill Ave. Dorchester 02124	632 Blue Hill Ave. Dorchester 02121
Services Offered	— child care — exercise & recreation — drug program — mental health — health care — housing counseling — after school	— health care — social service	— health care — social service — mental health — dental care — speech, hearing & language
Service Area/Service Load	Dorchester, Mattapan	Dorchester, Mattapan 42,000 patients-1976 57,000 projected-1977	Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan
Eligibility Requirements	None	None	None
Number of Employees	65	115; 12 member contingent of public health nurses	47
Length of Operation	7 years		3 years
Operating Funds	Private	Public	Public
Executive Director	Mr. Patrick Jones	Ms. E. Bugh	Mr. George Brent
Telephone Number	288-4900	826-3400	436-3000



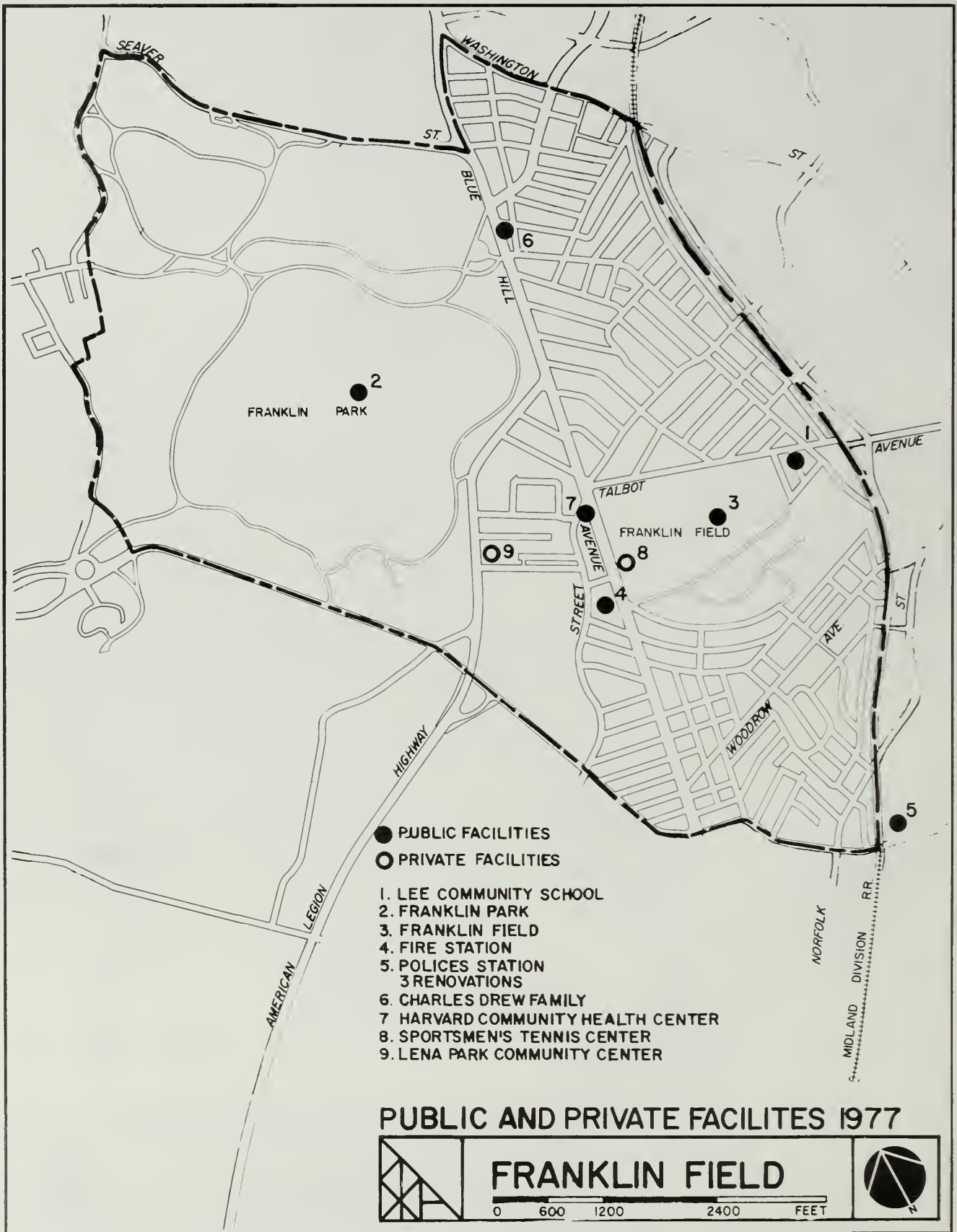
PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS 1968-77



FRANKLIN FIELD

0 600 1200 2400 FEET







Franklin Field Tennis Center

services, especially to the elderly. The Elderly Shuttle operates out of the Lee Community School and provides transportation to medical and recreational facilities. The Elderly Outreach Program assists persons who want to stay in their own home, but need some help in order to do it.

B. PAST MAJOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT (1968-1977)

Substantial capital expenditures have been made in Franklin Field since 1968, primarily on schools and parks. The Lee Community School was constructed at a cost of \$8,000,000 and continuing funding is provided for services and activities. The Bradford Elementary School was refurbished for \$480,000.

Franklin Park has received \$1,300,000 to date for improvements and will receive substantially more in the future. The playing fields on Franklin Field were recently reconstructed with \$100,000 from the City.

The City also built a new fire station on Blue Hill Avenue for \$750,000 and made repairs to Police Station 3 on Morton Street for \$250,000. The Public Works Department has expended \$520,050 for street, sidewalk, sewer and water improvements since 1968.

For the past three years, the City has operated a demolition and boarding program in Franklin Field with a budget of \$463,880 from 1975-1977.

The HIP program has provided

\$223,000 in public funds for the Franklin Field neighborhood. This public investment yielded a total investment of \$1,087,600 on housing. For public housing the City has augmented the efforts of the Boston Housing Authority by providing rehab crews using CETA funding of \$275,000. This crew has restored 100 apartments within the Franklin Field development.

Private investment, excluding HIP, has been limited in the area. The Sportsman's Tennis Center was constructed on Franklin Field and is considered one of the best tennis facilities in the City. Several stores near Morton Street have been renovated and the Wolcott School on Morton Street has been converted to commercial space.

C. 1978 PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM STATUS

The 1978 (July 1978-July 1979) Neighborhood Improvement Program for Franklin Field is a response to the two most significant problems facing this neighborhood: deterioration of the housing stock and general neighborhood blight.

The 1978 program concentrates on the area of Franklin Field north of Talbot Avenue, which has been designated a Concentrated Investment Area. In this way, City funds can have the greatest impact by coordinating with other efforts, such as the Lena Park Home-steading and the Section 8 Neighborhood Strategy Area proposal which has received tentative HUD approval.

A Pilot "Interest Reduction" program will be initiated in one area of Franklin Field. This program will be funded at \$100,000 and will be directed to homeowners who want to undertake major rehabilitation, but cannot afford conventional financing. The Interest Reduction program will provide low interest loans to eligible participants. The Lena Park Home-steading program will receive \$127,000 to improve houses in northern Franklin Field. HIP will be funded at \$280,000 in 1978 to encourage owner occupants to maintain their homes.

The City will make major improvements to public housing in Franklin Field. The Franklin Hill development will receive \$30,500 from the City for specific maintenance tasks and security, in addition to other funds from the Boston Housing Authority. The Franklin Field Family Housing will be landscaped and a tot lot added for \$165,000. The City will build a low retaining wall to separate the playing fields from the Franklin Field Elderly Housing.

The City will improve streets in Franklin Field through ongoing cleanup programs and capital improvements to streets and sidewalks. The Open Space Management Program will receive \$60,000 to clean and improve vacant lots in Franklin Field. This program will give priority to lots within the Concentrated Investment Area north of Talbot Avenue. The demolition and boarding programs will continue in Franklin Field.

In the Concentrated Investment Area, five streets are scheduled to receive new street lighting and four others will receive improvements such as reconstruction or skimcoating. These improvements will cost \$706,800. Five streets in other parts of Franklin Field will be improved as well.

In the area of human services, the City will continue to support Franklin Field's Senior Shuttle and will provide home care to senior citizens who need special help. A special security patrol in Franklin Field's business areas will continue and the Blue Hill Avenue Commission and the City's Office of Program Development will hire a commercial development planner to prepare studies and recommendations on Blue Hill Avenue.

III. Proposed Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

A. COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING STRATEGY

The Franklin Field neighborhood is a predominantly residential area, presently in a state of flux. Some areas are improving, others are getting worse, but nowhere is the situation truly stable. Housing improvement should be the top priority for City funding in Franklin Field.

Three major problems affect all of Franklin Field: (1) deterioration of housing and neighborhood blight, (2) abandonment, and (3) deterioration of public housing. These problems have begun to be addressed in various ways, but all also require additional research and analysis.

1. Programs for Existing Homeowners

Past efforts toward improvement of Franklin Field housing have had limited success.

The Housing Improvement Program was designed to improve housing maintenance by leveraging private investment through rebates. In Franklin Field, HIP has been relatively unsuccessful, with only 8.7% of the eligible owners actually receiving rebates which on the average were less than \$1,000. This level of participation was largely due to the limited ability of residents to obtain financing for the original repairs.

One answer to the problem of financing maintenance in Franklin Field is the Pilot Interest Reduction program. The purpose is to provide rehabilitation incentives and assistance to owner-occupants who are unable to obtain conventional financing. The grant will be used to make the monthly cost required to finance the rehabilitation of a property affordable by effectively reducing the interest rate on a home improvement loan to 3%. Initially, properties within the triangle formed by Blue Hill Avenue, Harvard and Glenway Streets will be eligible.



One of the most important unmet needs for the existing homeowner is education in such areas as budgeting, financing and tenant management. Franklin Field has been plagued with housing abandonment and foreclosures, many of which could be prevented with counseling to the homeowner. The Housing Improvement Program should focus on serving this necessary educational function.

HIP was designed not only as a rebate program, but also as a total homeownership service which provides counseling and contractor referrals. Residents should be made aware of this facet of HIP and encouraged to make use of it. The Lena Park Community Corp. also provides homeowner counseling as part of its homesteading program.

2. Increased Housing Opportunities

Many opportunities exist in Franklin Field for increased homeownership. One of these would be an expanded homesteading program. There are 120 abandoned buildings in Franklin Field, representing an enormous opportunity for revitalization. Given the rising cost of new construction, it is essential to preserve existing housing and rehabilitation is the most practical means of accomplishing this. Since most of these vacant buildings are still privately owned, a City-sponsored homesteading program which includes an expeditious foreclosure process should be established.

The Lena Park Community Corp. has already undertaken a homesteading effort in northern Franklin Field. The Lena Park Homesteading program will continue until July 1979, with a \$127,000 CDBG grant. The Lena Park program will return abandoned vacant housing to the market through a combination of low acquisition

costs, non-profit CETA work, development subsidies and intensive counseling to the new owners. The goal for the next two years is that 16 properties be rehabilitated and sold to homesteaders. The City is supplementing these efforts, especially in the Concentrated Investment Area, with street and sidewalk repairs, continuing HIP support and public housing improvements.

Another answer to the need for education and increased owner occupancy may be the designation of a Neighborhood Housing Service (NHS) area in Franklin Field. The NHS is a neighborhood preservation program aimed at upgrading both individual properties and the neighborhood as a whole. To reverse the process of neighborhood deterioration, community residents, financial institutions and government agencies make a coordinated effort to provide technical assistance and financial support in the target neighborhood.

The NHS program receives substantial funding from the banking community, local foundations and other civic organizations. The program is privately initiated and is being implemented in twenty-three cities throughout the country by the Urban Reinvestment Task Force. The feasibility of an NHS in Franklin Field should be investigated. Two NHS programs exist in Boston: Dorchester and Mission Hill.

In addition to rehabilitation of older housing, many opportunities exist in Franklin Field for new housing construction. There are large vacant parcels near Lucerne and Arbutus Streets and near Erie and Ellington Streets. In addition, the Boston State Hospital site will be declared surplus soon, providing a large amount of land for future development. The feasibility of new development on these sites should be examined.

3. Neighborhood Improvements

The physical appearance of a neighborhood is one factor in a homeowner's decision to invest in his building. The Open Space Management Program cleans and improves vacant lots, thereby improving residents' confidence in the neighborhood. Open Space crews should continue to work in Franklin

Field, especially where the neighbors will maintain the lots.

In northern Franklin Field, the City has designated a Concentrated Investment Area, where the City will invest heavily in street and sidewalk repairs. These neighborhood improvements will coordinate with other housing improvement efforts, such as the Interest Reduction Program.

4. Multi-Family Housing Rehabilitation

Franklin Field has been designated a Section 8 Neighborhood Strategy Area, a program which provides rental subsidies to developers in order to encourage rehabilitation for low/moderate rents.

The proposed Neighborhood Strategy Area in Franklin Field is located on Blue Hill Avenue near the Franklin Field Tennis Center and Franklin Park. The area includes a sound residential neighborhood which is a Concentrated Investment Area and is adjacent to a public housing project for which State Pilot Modernization funds have been requested for major capital and management improvements.

The City's strategy is to use the Section 8 program for rehabilitation of large vacant, boarded apartment structures on Blue Hill Avenue and conversion of the surplus Paine Elementary School, which is currently vacant, into apartments. Rehabilitation of these structures will help to stabilize and upgrade the adjacent residential areas which are adversely affected by the blighting influence of abandonment on Blue Hill Avenue. Rehabilitation of these buildings will secure and encourage the ongoing and proposed public and private investments in the area. In addition, rehabilitation of these buildings which are so visible to those who live in and drive through the area will be a significant statement of commitment to revitalization.

5. Public Housing

Over the next few years, the Federal, State and local governments should make a coordinated effort to improve public housing in Franklin Field.

Franklin Field contains three large public housing projects: (1) Franklin

Hill Family Housing Project, located between Blue Hill Avenue, American Legion Highway and Franklin Hill Avenue; (2) Franklin Field Family Housing; and (3) the Franklin Field Elderly Housing Project, both located behind Franklin Field recreational park between Westview and Stratton Streets.

Franklin Hill

The Franklin Hill Family Housing Project contains 375 units. Designated as a federally-sponsored pilot program, the Franklin Hill Project has received federal funds for improvements such as bathroom modernization, upgrading of security and rehabilitation of vacant apartments. Recently, funds were allocated for electrical repairs, pointing of buildings, new roofing and landscaping.



Franklin Hill Public Housing Development

Franklin Field

The Franklin Field Housing Project will receive \$3 million in State funds and \$290,000 in CD monies for needed capital improvements as part of the State-sponsored Pilot Public Housing Systems Improvement Program. These funds will be used to redesign and rehabilitate apartments and overhaul major systems such as heating and trash collection. Currently over 50% of the floor area of these apartments is taken up with hallways. The redesign will give families more space.

Franklin Field Elderly Housing

The location of Franklin Field's elderly housing project is a major problem. Residents are isolated in the present location and find access to convenience stores and other activities difficult. The City of Boston provides a shuttle bus for residents of Franklin

Field Elderly Housing; however, the Senior Shuttle offers only a partial solution to the problem. Replacement elderly housing in Franklin Field should be a primary concern. A possible site for new elderly housing is the corner of Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street. The surplus elderly development could be converted to family public housing or refinanced as a mixed income, privately-owned development.

B. COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Blue Hill Avenue is the commercial center of Franklin Field and its revitalization can be a catalyst for the improvement of all of Franklin Field. Today, Blue Hill Avenue gives an image of total decay which adversely reflects on all of Franklin Field. Improving this image will yield benefits throughout the Blue Hill Avenue corridor. But before the problems of perception can be addressed, the physical problems must be solved.

First, a need exists for intensive, comprehensive study of Blue Hill Avenue to determine appropriate land use, future development and transportation policies. Marketing studies should be conducted to determine what types of businesses should be encouraged.

Since Blue Hill Avenue in Franklin Field is part of the Boston Plan Phase II, Federal money will be sought for revitalization. As part of the Boston Plan, the Blue Hill Avenue Commission, a broad based community group, has been designated the primary community representative for the Blue Hill Avenue Section of the Boston Plan. The Commission will coordinate the revitalization efforts in this area and will have an important role in determining the kinds of changes which are made.

Currently, the Commission has received a commitment that the City will not auction any City-owned vacant lots and buildings on the Avenue and will be coordinating the cleanup of these areas. Participants in a youth employment program will be used to cleanup vacant storefronts, reducing their negative impact. The city will also continue its program of demoli-

tion of excess commercial space. The Open Space Management Program has done extensive cleanup work along Blue Hill Avenue and will continue in 1978-79.

Blue Hill Avenue revitalization is not an attempt to return to the original strip of small commercial stores. Business nodes should be developed at key points that include adequate parking, a variety of modern stores and good access. Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street is an excellent site, since some business exists there already and the market exists for further development. Talbot Avenue at Blue Hill also has potential for smaller scale business development, primarily small convenience stores. These business nodes should be supported with street and sidewalk repairs, parking, lighting and other amenities.

C. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As previously stated, the unemployment rate in Franklin Field is approximately double the rate for the rest of Boston. This in part accounts for the lower median family income; which is two-thirds of the Boston median income based on the 1970 census. While unemployment and the lack of income cannot account for all of Franklin Field's problems, deferred maintenance of housing and vacant stores are related in part to the lack of employment opportunities.

Little opportunity exists to bring industry into Franklin Field, although the Boston State hospital site has been suggested as a possibility for light industry. The goals of the City strategy should be to: (1) provide improved access to job markets in downtown Boston, Hyde Park, Cambridge and along Rt. 128; and (2) address the need for employment training programs. The first goal relates to the Replacement/Transit Improvement Study and the issue of access to jobs will be studied in Phase II of this study.

D. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

As part of the process of relocating the Orange Line, the MBTA is currently studying the needs for im-

proved transit service in Franklin Field/Mattapan. The importance of this project to the future of these neighborhoods cannot be overemphasized, since the replacement transit can act as a catalyst for major economic growth and revitalization.

There are four general alternatives for transit in the Blue Hill Avenue corridor. (It should be emphasized that these routes are under study, not the final specific recommendations.) Alternatives A and B run up Blue Hill Avenue and Warren Street to Dudley, then through the South End on Washington Street using light rail trolleys or a busway. The advantages for Franklin Field are that these alternatives would tie in with the redevelopment of Blue Hill Avenue and provide quick access from Mattapan Square to business centers at Dudley, Grove Hall and the downtown.

Alternatives C and D would utilize the Midlands Railroad running northeast to southwest through Mattapan using commuter rail or light rail trolleys. This alternative would connect with Mattapan Square at Woodhaven Street. At Washington Street, the commuter rail would continue along the Midlands to South Station or a trolley would run along Washington and Warren Streets connecting Mattapan to Dudley Station and the South End. Advantages to Alternatives C and D include potential high speed access to the job market in downtown Boston and possibly Hyde Park. This proposal would also avoid the possible safety and noise problems which could occur on Blue Hill Avenue.

In addition, crosstown transit service from Dudley Station to Columbia Point is being studied, and could provide Franklin Field with better access to institutions and job markets in the Fenway, western Boston and Cambridge.

Modes of transportation studied include trolley cars, either underground or in a reserved median, buses in a reserved median and commuter rail (Alternative C only). Other factors studied include current transportation service, community goals, environmental factors, land use and development and cost effectiveness. Given the alternatives from Phase I of the

replacement transit process, the issues to be studied are:

- (1) Opposition of some residents to trolleys on Blue Hill Avenue.
- (2) Revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue vs. central location of the Midlands Railroad.
- (3) Extensions of commuter rail to Hyde Park.

As part of the Replacement Transit Improvement Study, community residents set out their goals for transit in Franklin Field. The selected alternative should attempt to meet these objectives:

- (1) to provide expedient transit to Mattapan Square and Dudley Station.
- (2) To encourage revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue with fixed rail transit as a stimulus.
- (3) to avoid major changes which would drastically change the neighborhood character. New service may not be needed if short-term improvements are made.
- (4) to carefully study the safety problems created by a bus or trolley median reservation combined with high speed auto traffic.

E. PUBLIC FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS

1. Franklin Park

A major focus of the City for the next few years will be improvements to Franklin Park. The Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the MDC and School Department, will be making a coordinated effort to renew the Park so that more people will use it.

Major funding sources include:

- (a) a \$32 million program from the State for the improvement of the Franklin Park Zoo. Groundbreaking for 3 new exhibits took place on September 6, 1978. It is hoped that the zoo will become a major attraction for residents throughout the Boston Area.
- (b) \$160,000 from the City to build a new clubhouse.
- (c) \$200,000 from the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, matched by \$200,000 from the City, to develop a nature walk system around Scarborough Pond.



Charles Drew Family Life Center

Additional issues and projects within the park will be (1) a revised master plan, (2) restoration of the golf course, (3) security within the park, and (4) traffic problems created by increased usage. It is hoped that the MBTA transit improvements for Franklin Field will allow people access to the park without users having to drive to the park.

2. Franklin Field

Another significant public facility in need of work is Franklin Field. Parts of the field are nothing more than weeds, which lowers both the quality of the area and the amount of active space. A field house is also needed, with facilities for the field users, especially for rainy days or cold weather. Arrangements need to be made at the Lee Community School, MDC facility, and Sportsman's Tennis Club to jointly meet this need.

F. IMPROVED HUMAN SERVICES

The City encourages the development of human service agencies within its neighborhoods. Given the overwhelming demand by low and moderate income residents for services and the inability of these people to support such services from individual incomes, it is essential that the City continue its involvement in health care, day care, and elderly programs.

Specifically, the City should encourage further growth of agencies within Franklin Field. All but the Lena Park Center need room for expansion and diversification of service. Growth of the social services should be coordinated with the overall development of Blue Hill Avenue, since institutional uses would be very appropriate for the area both in terms of expansion room and accessibility, particularly where commercial uses are concentrated.

The Harvard Street Health Center is extremely overcrowded and overlaps with the Drew Family Life Center service area. The feasibility of a new, larger health center should be examined by the City.

IV. Summary of Proposed Three-Year Improvement Program (1979-1981)

A. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The City's Three-Year Improvement Program is a coordinated effort designed to improve Franklin Field as a residential community by strengthening homeowner confidence. In order to achieve this goal, the City should continue to provide not only programs which directly affect the quality of the housing stock, but also those programs which address commercial development, human services, public facility and the disposition of vacant lots.

Housing

Stabilizing housing conditions within Franklin Field by encouraging the upgrading of the owner-occupied housing stock and investor-owned properties should be a major priority of the City of Boston. A modified Housing Improvement Program (HIP) should continue to be a major component of the City's effort. HIP has demonstrated that homeowners, given financial incentives and technical counseling, are anxious to make needed repairs to improve the overall quality of the housing stock. However, the City should develop a mechanism that will address the effectiveness of the program and work toward the modification of program limitations.

Several considerations should serve as a basis for program modification: how to modify the HIP program in order to make it more responsive to the needs of lower income owners of housing in need of substantial repairs; modification of HIP to service individuals with marginal credit status.

Expansion of the Interest Reduction Program throughout Franklin Field should also be a part of the City's Three-Year Comprehensive Development Strategy. Currently, the program operates only in the McClellan/Bradshaw area of Franklin Field.

The Interest Reduction Program provides much of the same technical assistance and financial benefits as the Federal Section 312 Loan Program, with the added advantage of maintaining the involvement of private lending institutions. Under the program, the City provides interest reduction grants to eligible owner-occupants to effectively reduce the interest rate on a rehabilitation loan to 3%.

Expansion of the Interest Reduction Program, in concert with other housing rehabilitation programs, will contribute significantly to the restoration of Franklin Field.

The Franklin Field District has a serious problem of housing abandonment, which has given the district a poor residential and commercial image. The City should initiate a homesteading program using BRA-owned and City tax-foreclosed properties. Over the next few years this program could help to stabilize the residential character of the area and demonstrate the City's ability to develop a positive alternative to building demolition.

Commercial Development

Historically, Blue Hill Avenue, considered a major artery through Franklin Field, has supported extensive commercial use. Presently, abandonment of commercial structures has changed the character of Blue Hill Avenue with commercial activity mainly occurring at Talbot and Blue Hill and Morton and Blue Hill.

Although the problems affecting the area are substantial, there are clear indications that Blue Hill Avenue may very well be at a turning point. Currently the Blue Hill Avenue Commission is actively encouraging and facilitating the participation of community residents in the long-term planning and implementation of the redevelopment of the Blue Hill Avenue corridor and the impacted communities.

Reconstruction of the Blue Hill Avenue roadway is scheduled under the Urban Systems Program. When completed, the project will provide new street reconstruction and street resurfacing, new installation and upgrading of traffic signals, street trees and pedestrian amenities.

Neighborhood Improvements

As part of the overall three year strategy to strengthen neighborhood confidence, the City should continue to coordinate and fund neighborhood physical improvements. New street lighting, skimcoating and sidewalk reconstruction should be expanded throughout Franklin Field. Additionally, there should be further weeding out of deteriorated commercial storefronts and continued cleaning and securing of vacant lots.

THREE YEAR PROGRAM SUMMARY TABLE

ISSUE	STRATEGY	1978 IMPROVEMENTS	PROPOSED 1979-1981
Housing Stabilization of private stock	Encourage housing maintenance	HIP — \$280,000	
		Pilot Interest Reduction Program — \$100,000.	Expand, if successful.
Abandonment	Whenever possible, board vacant buildings. Avoid demolition as a strategy.	Boarding & demolition — \$208,500.	Moratorium on demolition of all brick structures, continue to demolish hazardous wood frame buildings.
	Prevention	HIP HUD Neighborhood Strategy Area rehab of 190 apartments in large vacant buildings. Lena Park Home-owner Counseling — \$100,000.	Expanded outreach. Explore feasibility of establishing a Neighborhood Housing Services Program
	Rehab of vacant buildings.	Boarding program	Develop city-sponsored homesteading program and accelerated tax foreclosure process to take buildings sooner after abandonment.
		Lena Park Homesteading	Expand homesteading effort.
Neighborhood Blight	Clean vacant lots.	Open Space Management — \$60,000.	Demolish unusable Infill buildings and rehab those that are marketable. Encourage reuse of vacant land as side yards, gardens, etc.
	Improve streets.	Capital Improvements	Continue to concentrate efforts in certain areas to maximize impact.
Public Housing	Capital Improvements.	Franklin Field Family Pilot Public Housing Program Vacancy Rehab — \$235,500.	Expand BHA maintenance efforts to improve quality of projects.
	New Elderly Housing		Develop parcel near Blue Hill and Morton for replacement elderly housing.
New Construction	Develop large vacant tracts of land for new housing.		Study feasibility of developing new family housing at Erie-Ellington or Arbutus, and Boston State Hospital.
Commercial Revitalization	Improve security.	Special security patrol	Continue foot patrol.
	Develop commercial nodes.	OPD Commercial Planner Blue Hill Avenue Commission	Land use and marketing studies on Blue Hill Avenue. Open Space Management boarding to improve appearance. Zoning changes to define nodes. Provision of amenities, street repairs and new lighting.
Transportation Improvement	Public transit improvement.	Replace/Transit Improvement Study	Work to meet community goals for long-range transit. Provide adequate interim service to Dudley and downtown Boston during Orange Line reconstruction.
	Street improvements.	Public Works — street, sidewalks and lighting improvements \$706,800.	Continue improvements, especially in (1) concentrated investment areas, (2) business nodes Blue Hill Avenue — Urban Systems. Transit extension to Hyde Park.

ISSUE	STRATEGY	1978 IMPROVEMENTS	PROPOSED 1979-1981
Human Services	Improvement employment opportunities and training programs.	---	Expanded manpower training programs, particularly among young adults. Provide for Harvard Street Health Center expansion as part of Blue Hill Avenue redevelopment. Continued elderly support.
	Expand health human service agencies.	---	
	Continued support for the elderly.	Senior Shuttle — \$17,000 Area II Home Care — \$20,000	
Public Facilities	Franklin Park improvements.	\$32 million State money for Zoo \$160,000 new clubhouse \$400,000 nature walk around Scarborough Pond.	Revise Franklin Park Master Plan. Improve golf course. Study traffic problems in Franklin Park.
	Franklin Field	---	Improve quality of playing fields. Improve maintenance and programming.

APPENDICES

I. Neighborhood History

The Franklin Field area was originally a part of Dorchester which was annexed to Boston in 1870. Railroad passenger service on the Midlands Branch in 1855, and later trolley service along Blue Hill Avenue in the 1890's created a residential construction boom in the Franklin Field area during the turn of the century.

The neighborhood was densely built-up with two- and three-family houses for Irish and other immigrants. The Irish were largely replaced by Jews displaced by the Chelsea Fire of 1908. The Jewish population has recently been replaced by blacks displaced by urban renewal in the 1960's and attracted to the area by inexpensive FHA insured mortgages funded under the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group Program (BBURG).

The process of racial change and the aging housing stock had a severe effect around Franklin Field. During this transition many white owners let



Old Turnpike - Toll House; Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street

their homes deteriorate; houses were abandoned, mortgages were foreclosed and property was taken for back taxes. In some cases white owners who could not find buyers would move to the suburbs and operate their property (three-family, two-family, sometimes even single family houses) as absentee landlords.

Real estate investors bought some buildings and "milked" them by charging as much rent as possible and providing little or no maintenance. In other cases unscrupulous real estate

brokers bought houses cheaply from frightened white owners and sold them at inflated prices to black buyers.

Housing abandonment has become severe just south of Franklin Field, as absentee-owned "milked" buildings become uninhabitable, and as homeowners cannot afford to pay escalating operating costs and repair serious defects. Relatively higher unemployment among blacks in the current recession has intensified this problem.

II. 1975-1977 Neighborhood Improvement Programs

The Neighborhood Improvement Programs for Franklin Field have centered around slowing the dynamic of housing deterioration and addressing the problem of larger areas of vacant land which have resulted from extensive demolition. (See chart below)

1975-1977 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

HOUSING PROGRAMS	1975	1976	1977
- Clearance of abandoned, unsafe, and dangerous buildings	\$ 347,000 CD	\$ 200,000 CD	\$ 225,000 CD
- Securing of vacant buildings for future rehabilitation	26,500 CD	20,000 CD	20,000 CD
- Restoration and improvement of vacant lots in residential areas	40,500 CD	--	--
- Open Space Management Program	--	200,000 CD	100,000 CD
- HIP	220,000 CD	350,000 CD	200,000 CD
- Lena Park Housing Project — a community based program to provide housing counseling to families in this area inexperienced with home ownership. Some area homes rehabilitated.	--	--	100,000 CD
- Modernization of public housing at Franklin Hill Avenue through the BHA			
- Roofs (Federal Modernization) (Program in planning with previously approved funds)	180,000	--	--
- Security screens			137,500 CD
- Modernization of public housing at Franklin Field	--	153,000	
- Doors, skylights, roofs (State modernization funds)			137,500
- Elderly project: improve sidewalks and lighting			

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	1975	1976	1977
Public Facilities			
- Charles Drew Family Life Center			
- Construction (95% complete)	1,200,000	--	--
- Completion of facility	75,000	--	--
Parks			
- Erie-Ellington Playground play equipment restoration, benches, tables, trees (under construction by December 1)	80,000 CD	--	--
- Franklin Field restoration of Mall at Blue Hill Avenue, work on playfields, floodlights (Mall and floodlights complete) (new fields, etc., under construction by December 1)	525,000	--	--
- Basketball courts	30,000 CD	--	--
Public Works			
- Sodium lighting — Blue Hill Avenue to Morton Street (completed)	31,000	--	--
- Residential street lighting	95,397 CD	--	--
- Sidewalk reconstruction (under construction)	187,526 CD	--	50,000 CD
- City share for engineering costs and signal improvements at Glenway and Harvard Streets (design 10% complete)	4,500	--	--
- Installation of pedestrian signal — Harvard and Glenway	--	--	25,000 CD
- Water and Sewer Study — engineering analysis to study problem of flooding basements in area (in progress)	18,500 CD	--	--
- Traffic signal — Harvard & Norwell	--	--	25,000
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES			
Health			
- Operating expenses for Charles Drew Family Life Center	226,511 CD	90,000 CD	--
- Foot patrolmen (Blue Hill Avenue from Talbot to Columbia and from Morton to Stratton)	48,000 CD	--	27,000 CD
- Business Development Specialist — Blue Hill Avenue	--	--	14,000 CD
Elderly			
- Elderly Van Senior Shuttle to operate out of the Lee Community School to provide transportation for medical, social, and recreational purposes to any elderly resident of Boston, age 60 or over	6,416 CD	16,000 CD	16,500 CD
Blue Hill Avenue Improvements (Urban Systems)			
The City is currently involved in design of this project which is expected to be constructed in 1978.			
Total Community Development (CD) Funding	\$1,356,350	\$ 876,000	\$1,063,550
Total Annual Public Improvement Program	\$3,371,850	\$1,029,000	\$1,226,050

III. Community Participation Opportunities

A. INTRODUCTION

There are many ways in which the Franklin Field community shapes and directs growth within its neighborhoods and commercial centers. Planting shrubs along property lines, utilizing the Housing Improvement Program, and voicing concerns at zoning hearings all affect the quality of life in the Franklin Field community. There are, however, several opportunities for community action at a larger scale which can effectively have a long-term impact on growth of the community.

B. ZONING CHANGES

Zoning is a legal tool used to shape land use patterns and regulate the scale of development within given boundaries. The zoning districts in Franklin Field have served the community in establishing residential and commercial uses that are reasonably consistent in scale and density. In the last ten years, changes in residential and commercial demands have led to a breakdown, in some instances, of zoning functions. Weekly zoning variance applications and the encroachment of non-compatible uses upon one another indicate a need to re-evaluate the existing zoning in Franklin Field and make appropriate changes in the designation of zoning areas.

The procedures for changes and modification of the Boston Zoning Code are well established. The following is an outline of the procedures:

1. Change of Zoning (or Procedure A)

- a. Proposed zoning change is presented to the BRA Board for approval.
- b. BRA Board recommends change to the Zoning Commission.
- c. Zoning Commission holds public hearing following advertisement and notification of appropriate parties.

d. Zoning Commission can pass measure with seven affirmative votes.

e. Ordinance goes to the Mayor for approval. (Veto can be overridden with nine affirmative votes of the Zoning Commission.)

2. Change of Zoning (Procedure B)

- a. Citizen group request hearing before Zoning Commission.
- b. Zoning Commission asks BRA for recommendation.
- c-e Same as Procedure A.

The BRA will conduct an evaluation of present zoning in target areas throughout the Franklin Field community. Information will be presented at a community meeting along with recommendations for changes. The BRA Neighborhood Planner will hold a series of working meetings with community representatives and the Little City Hall to consolidate a number of zoning change recommendations which are both warranted in a technical evaluation and supported by the Mattapan community. The procedure for a change in zoning can then be initiated.

C. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) AND CAPITAL BUDGET (CB) PROPOSALS

The CD program involves the distribution of Federal funds that come to the City with Federal requirements that certain neighborhood improvement activities and citizen participation be carried on under the program. The use of CD funds are primarily limited to housing, neighborhood improvements and public services in low and moderate income neighborhoods of the City. The following appendix lists programs that were funded in this neighborhood during the past three years from 1975 to 1977.

The City's annual Capital Budget (CB) is usually determined at the same time that the CD budget is formulated. The City raises CB funds by selling tax exempt long-term municipal bonds to private investors to fund capital improvements such as schools, public buildings, parks, streets, lighting and underground utilities.

The City's annual process for determining both the CD and CB includes the following steps:

1. An initial neighborhood hearing is held in each Little City Hall district to explain funding requirements for the program, report on the past year's projects and present the proposed neighborhood profiles (October or November).
2. A second neighborhood hearing is held to receive and discuss neighborhood proposals for funding the next year (November or December).
3. The Little City Hall Manager, Office of Program Development (OPD) Programmer and BRA Neighborhood Planner meet to review funding requests and prepare a proposed Neighborhood Improvement Plan (December and January).
4. The proposed Neighborhood Improvement Plans are presented to the Mayor's Neighborhood Development Council (NDC) for approval. This group is chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Fiscal Affairs and includes two additional Deputy Mayors, the Mayor's Housing Advisor and Directors of the BRA, Office of Public Service and OPD (January or February).
5. Upon approval of the NDC, the proposed Neighborhood Improvement Programs are submitted to the City Council for their review and approval (February or March).
6. The City Council holds a series of neighborhood hearings on the proposed budgets. It then approves the budgets with amendments based on opinions voiced at the hearings (March or April).
7. The Mayor reviews and approves the final Neighborhood Improvement Plans (April).
8. The proposed CD application and budget is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for its review and funding (May and June).
9. The CD funds become available for spending (July 1st).

D. MAJOR NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

Area Cooperation Team 288-1058
6 Ripley Road
Dorchester, MA 02121
Director: Mrs. Eva McCargo

Area Six Community Cooperation 282-9839
81 Ellington Street
Dorchester, MA 02121
Director: Mrs. Hallie Whitlow

Community Beautification Program 442-6311
For Roxbury and Dorchester 427-9494
101 Crawford Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
Director: Mrs. Augusta Bailey

Tri-Blu Neighborhood Association
197 Normandy Street
Dorchester, MA 02121
Director: Mr. Wendel Bourne
Tel. 442-9812 Home

Fenlon Street Association
14 Fenlon Street
Dorchester, MA 02121
Director: Mr. Del Brook Binns
Tel. 282-9042 Home

Community Betterment Association
11 Harlem Street
Dorchester, MA 02121
Director: Mr. Walter Thomas

Concerned People Committee 223-7535 Office
22 Esmond Street 288-2884 Home
Dorchester, MA 02121
Director: Mr. Larry Gaines

Grass Roots
53 Kingsdale Street

Brookview Street Association
38 Brookview Street
Dorchester, MA 02124
Director: Ms. Janet Spence

Consolidated Efforts For A Brighter Future
19 Ballou Avenue
Dorchester, MA 02124
Director: Mr. Jessie Corbin
Tel. 436-7686

Blue Hill-Morton Street Merchants Association
1162 Blue Hill Avenue
Dorchester, MA 02124
Director: Mr. Frank Williams
Tel. 265-7446

E. SUMMARY

The planning process is ongoing. Day to day decisions make up one part of the process. By establishing medium and long-range goals for the community's growth, these day to day decisions and comprehensive planning programs can reflect the values and desires of the Franklin Field district.

Community participation in both the procedures for change and program development are vital in maximizing the benefits of public investments in Franklin Field.

CITY OF BOSTON

Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Robert L. Farrell, *Chairman*

Joseph J. Walsh, *Vice Chairman*

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James K. Flaherty, *Assistant Treasurer*

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Kane Simonian, *Secretary*

Robert J. Ryan, *Director*

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROGRAM

Roy Bishop, *Director*

James Baecker, *Assistant Director*

Dennis Lloyd, *Franklin Field Planner*

Anne Stoddard, *Planning Assistant*

